

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-05 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /062 W

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R 221015Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 43

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 1210

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SGEN, TH

SUBJECT: MONKS CHALLENGE THE BUDDHIST HIERARCHY

REF: BANGKOK 846

1. THE LATEST MONKS RALLY (REF) HAS COME TO AN END. THE FIVE MONKS WHO HAD GONE ON A HUNGER STRIKE ARE NOW EATING AGAIN. THE SUPREME PATRIARCH PROMISED THEM JANUARY 17 THAT HE WILL COMPLETE CONSIDERATION OF THE REINSTATEMENT OF MONKHOOK AND ECCLESIASTICAL RANKS TO PHRA PIMONTHAM AND PHRA SATANASOPHON BEFORE FEBRUARY 5. HE PROMISED JUSTICE AS THE PROTESTING MONKS DEMANDED, BUT ASKED FOR MORE TIME POINTING OUT THAT "...THE CASE MUST BE WORKED OUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH BUDDHIST PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS TO RETAIN THE PRESTIGE OF THAI MONKS."

2. COMMENT: THE ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCIL FINALLY APPEARS AS THOUGH IT WILL ACT TO RESTORE THE TWO MONKS' RANKS. THE DILEMMA IS THAT IF IT DOES SO, PHRA PIMONTHAM AND COMPANY WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO FORCE REFORMS ON THE CONSERVATIVE HIERARCHY. IF IT DECIDES AGAINST REINSTATEMENT THE PROTESTING MONKS WILL BE BACK IN GREATER NUMBERS THAT EVER BEFORE. WE LOOK FOR CONTINUED TURBULENCE IN BUDDHIST RANKS, WHATEVER THE DECISION.

KINTNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO001210
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750024-0031
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750132/aaaabbob.tel
Line Count: 60
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 846
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MONKS CHALLENGE THE BUDDHIST HIERARCHY
TAGS: PINT, SGEN, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006